

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD**

February 8, 2022 – 3:30 P.M.

Hybrid Held Public Meeting (both physically present and virtual attendees)

[Zoom Teleconference](#)

Meeting ID#: 992 6733 7841

(267 831 0333 from phones)

BOARD MEMBERS ATTENDING: John Corkum; Brett Altman; Stephen Quigley; Marla Hexter; Ned Foley

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF ATTENDING: Scott France; Anne Leavitt-Gruberger; Yvonne Montgomery; Stephen Zbyszinski, Ann Marie Meehan

PRESS: None

GUESTS: Dulcie Flaharty; Elizabeth Emlen; Terry Bird

1. Call to Order & Introductions

The hybrid public meeting (both physically present and virtual attendees) was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Mr. John Corkum. Attendance was noted; Mr. Corkum and Mr. Ned Foley were present and three board members were virtually present; it was determined that a quorum was achieved.

Ms. Yvonne Montgomery, Senior Assistant Solicitor of the county Solicitor's Office, stated that she believed that this Board meeting is consistent with the requirements for holding public meetings as outlined in the Sunshine Act and Act 15 of 2020. Advanced notice and instruction was given to the public prior to the meeting, including details on those wishing to make a public comment.

There was no public comment.

2. Reorganization of the Farm Board

ACTION

Ms. Anne Leavitt-Gruberger explained that it is time to nominate and elect the members to hold board positions for 2022. After a brief discussion, board members agreed to put forward Mr. Corkum, Mr. Quigley, and Mr. Altman to serve as Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary, respectively, for 2022. Mr. Corkum requested that the Board take a vote on the three nominations.

A motion was made by Mr. Quigley and seconded by Mr. Altman to approve the nomination of Mr. Corkum as Board Chair. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Mr. Altman and seconded by Mr. Corkum to approve the nomination of Mr. Quigley as Vice Chair. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by Ms. Hexter and seconded by Mr. Foley to approve the nomination of Mr. Altman as Secretary. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Minutes of the October 12, 2021 Meeting

ACTION

Mr. Corkum called for comments on the minutes of the October 12, 2021 meeting. Ms. Hexter requested that numbers be spelled out in the minutes and Ms. Ann Marie Meehan consented to the request.

A motion was made by Ms. Marla Hexter and seconded by Mr. Quigley to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2021 Farm Board Meeting as amended. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Status of the Farmland Preservation Program

Mr. Stephen (Steve) Zbyszinski provided a summary of the program and an update on 2020 applicants that have recently gone to settlement. Since the program began, a total of 10,226 acres have been preserved. One farm (the 33 acre Geverd pepper farm in Upper Frederick) went to settlement last year. Two farms (Melanson and Lutchendorf) went to settlement in early 2022. The other two farms that await settlement should be finalized shortly. Steve stated that seven applications were received in 2021, six offers were made, and five offers were accepted, and staff expects that they will be preserved in 2022.

5. 2022 Farmland Preservation Applications Overview

Steve reported that a total of eighteen applications (sixteen new applications and two reapplications) have been received.

He provided a brief description of eighteen farms submitted by applicants for Montgomery County's 2022 Farmland Preservation program:

Farmland preservation: all 2022 Applicants								
new applicants this year are in bold type								
r a n k	Na me	Township	Acres	File #	Type	Eligibility	Notes	2022 Score
1	Wagner	Upper Frederick	100	22-05-1	hay	State	withhold 5 acres, newly purchased	63.25
2	Major, Michelle	New Hanover	27.28	22-15-1	equine	State		62.25
3	Yerger 2	Upper Hanover	57.61	22-13-1	hay and goats	State	**there is a lot of garbage on these two parcels, also adjacent to Stankunas, 33 acres farmed	59.05
4	Bergey, L. Duane and M. Dawn	New Hanover	10	22-16-1	hay, sheep, goats, ducks	County	Property is 10 acres exactly including house.	54.65
5	Frankenfield, Andrew Dale and Tanya Joy	Franconia	12	03-12-2	cattle and vegetables	County	Excluding 2 acres around house and buildings	54.10
6	College Settlement	Horsham	30.5	22-17-1	fruit and veg CSA, bees	State	Crops unique to the area	53.90
7	Renninger, Ellen	Douglass	20.362	22-08-1	hay	State	adjacent to Magnolia Meadows and other Renninger farm	53.20
8	Baringer	Upper Hanover	18	22-06-1	hay and sheep	State	adjacent to Lukof	51.67
9	Pileggi #2	Upper Salford	22.45	22-02-1	hay	County	adjacent to land owned by Montco (and Upper Salford)	51.63
10	Schoenly, Kenneth	Douglass	17	20-04-3	crop and livestock	State	adjacent to Moser properties	50.67
11	Grater, Kirk	Lower Frederick	40	22-12-1	hay	State	Needs to exclude acreage to meet 50% threshold	50.44
12	Reihman, Clare	Marlborough	40	22-09-1	hay	State	The acre lot located in the rear of property is county owned. His grandfather sold it to the railroad, which sold it to the county. Tracks are gone and Claire owns the RR ROW. He is interested in getting that property back.	49.81
13	Yerger 3 (robert and theresa)	Upper Hanover	23	22-14-1	feed crops	State	Adjacent to Stankunas	47.65
14	Risko	New Hanover	20.77	22-04-1	hay	County	Cutting it close to 10 farmed acres. Wants to exclude buildings.	46.62
15	Firely	New Hanover	47	22-03-1	equine	State	adjacent to back end of Magazzeni	43.64
16	Reese, Diane	New Hanover	13.6	22-07-1	equine	County		38.71
17	Kehl	Douglass	33.99	22-10-1	hay	County	Excluding the 1 acre house lot.	38.06

1 8	Pileggi #1	Upper Salford	19.86	22-01-1	hay, equine	County	adjacent to land owned by Montco (and Upper Salford)	29.67
							avg.	49.94

Steve also discussed the staff’s 2021 outreach efforts to spread the word about the Farm Preservation Program, including his appearance on the Pennsylvania Environmental Council’s podcast. County staff produces two annual newsletters and appeared at various farm-related area events including the 4-H fair in Collegeville. The County’s Keep Farming Event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anne provided some context regarding the county’s preserved farms; the average size of a preserved farm in Montgomery County is 55 acres, there are 600,000 acres forever preserved across the state, and it has been thirty-two years since the county commissioners approved the institution of the farm preservation program.

6. Executive Session

The Farm Board paused the meeting and held an executive session to discuss appraisal recommendations for the program applications received in 2022. After executive session, the public meeting continued.

7. 2022 Appraisal Recommendations

ACTION

Anne asked the Board members to vote on the appraisals for farms selected for consideration in the executive session. The Board decided to move forward on fifteen farms.

A motion was made by Mr. Altman and seconded by Ms. Hexter to authorize the Montgomery County Farmland Preservation staff to obtain appraisals for fifteen of the eighteen farms under consideration for preservation in 2022. The motion was unanimously approved.

Board members and members of the public commended the staff on their efforts to increase the number of applications and were impressed by the number of farms preserved in the county.

Anne explained that the owners of existing preserved farms were spreading the word about the program and that that was very helpful in raising the profile of the county’s farm preservation program.

8. Next Farm Board Meeting — March 8, 2022

Mr. Zbyszinski announced that the next Farm Board meeting is scheduled to be held on March 8, 2022.

9. Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. Corkum and seconded by Mr. Altman to adjourn the public meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Marie Meehan

FINAL